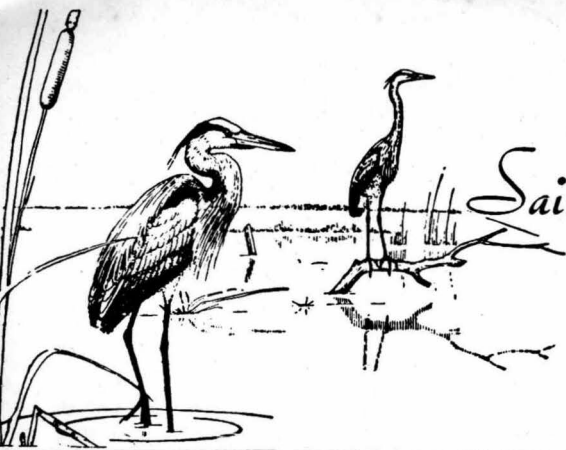




Saint Louis Audubon

Bulletin

October, 1962

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CHARLES TYLER HOTCHKISS TETON TRAILS THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 1

Third Baptist Church, Grand and Washington — 8:15 P. M.

The second of this season's Audubon Screen Tours will be presented by "Ty" Hotchkiss and his wife, Julie, who have devoted many adventurous years to nature photography. With a vast supply of patience and a good knowledge of animal behavior at his command, Mr. Hotchkiss has produced numerous outstanding wildlife films.

This all-color picture is entitled "Teton Trails" and will be narrated by Tyler Hotchkiss who for 7 years was naturalist and ranger at Grand Teton, Mt. McKinley and Everglades National Parks.

At the University of Connecticut, he studied Forestry and Wildlife Management, then became a Physical Training Instructor during his term in the military service. In 1948 he graduated from the University of Illinois with a Master's Degree in Physical Education. He later attended Colorado Agricultural and Mechanical College in Fort Collins, Colorado, to take additional courses in Park Recreation. His interest in recreation and wildlife management finally led him into the National Park Service.

Now living in Homestead, Florida, the Hotchkiss' continue to record their outdoor adventures on film in order to share their absorbing experiences with others.

Our distinguished member Leonard Hall will introduce the speaker.

"A DREAM COME TRUE"

By WALLY GEORGE

It is the ambition of all birders to visit new areas in order to see species of birds which are new to him. It was this ambition that spurred Tony McColl and I to follow the advice of Horace Greeley and "go west". Tony had travelled through the west two years previously with his family but his "birding stops" were few and far between because he was the only birder in the group. It was my first visit to the "Golden West".

Our expedition left St. Louis early on the morning of July 28th. Birds seen in western Missouri, Kansas, and eastern Colorado were essentially the same as those seen in the St. Louis area with the exception of Swainson's Hawks, Lark Buntings, Black-billed Magpies, and Western Kingbirds. Only after reaching Rocky Mountain National Park in central Colorado did we begin to use our western bird guides. Birds seen in the park included the

Canada and Stellar's Jays, Townsend's Solitaire, Mountain Chickadee, Western Tanager, Clark's Nutcracker, and Broad-tailed Hummingbird. The male hummingbird, with its distinctive whirring noise made by the beating of its wings, were common at the many hummingbird feeders in our campground. The nutcrackers were unbelievably tame. They were constantly fighting with the chipmunks and ground squirrels over choice tidbits offered by park visitors. We searched in the high alpine meadows for White-tailed Ptarmigans and Brown-capped Rosy Finches but we were unsuccessful. The view from Trail Ridge Road was one of the most beautiful we saw on the trip. The sight of the meandering stream and its many beaver ponds on the valley floor far below us was breath-taking.

West of the Rocky Mountains in western Colorado was an endless stretch of sage brush interspersed with mesas and dry stream beds. Towns in this area are scarce and it is probably because of the scarcity of humans that we found Golden Eagles fairly common in this region. Seven eagles were seen, within a few miles of each other, hunting along busy U. S. 40. Since this area is in the heart of sheep raising country (sheep ranchers are usually thought of as traditional eagle haters) perhaps the ranchers are at last realizing the value of these large raptors and are giving them the protection they deserve.

Bear River National Wildlife Refuge in north-east Utah contained unbelievable numbers of Western Grebes, Coots, Avocets, Black-necked Stilts, Wilson Phalaropes, White-faced Ibis, and White Pelicans. After only a short ride through that area of the refuge that is open to the public, it is easy to see why this refuge attracts the largest number of waterfowl in the nation during migration.

Birding became a secondary interest for the time being as mammals stole the show at Yellowstone Park. Black Bears were everywhere and Mule Deer, Elk, and Moose were seen several times. However the biggest thrill at Yellowstone was seeing the famous Grizzly Bear. We had been told by a park ranger where we might see the Grizzlies in the Hayden Valley. After a search of one hour we saw a huge Grizzly and two cubs emerge from a distant woodland at the edge of a vast meadow. The cubs seemed as large as full grown Black Bears. With my scope we were able to get good looks at the bears. Soon two other Grizzlies emerged from the woods and began to chase the original three bears across the meadow. Two other park visitors shared our joy in seeing this segment of "vanishing America".

Birding between Yellowstone and the Pacific Coast was rather unrewarding, but as soon as we reached the Oregon Coast lifers again became common. Gulls and Alcids were everywhere. Tufted Puffins were the most beautiful and Western Gulls were the most common of the coast birds. A large flock of Sooty Shearwaters feeding off the Washington Coast was a welcome addition to our list.

Before heading for southern California and a search for the California Condor we were joined by Dave Easterla, a recent graduate of M.U. and a ranger naturalist at Crater Lake National Park this summer. Dave had information on the whereabouts of several Condors in the Sespe Wildlife Refuge north of Filmore, California. On route to Filmore we saw several Yellow-billed Magpies in the Sacramento Valley. Our race against darkness was futile and we reached "Condor country" late at night. We camped in a roadside area and early the next morning we began our search. After a drive of twenty miles on a rocky mountain road and a long walk through chaparral (the fuel of the Los Angeles brush fires) we saw three of the huge Condors. Though there were no other birds in the sky at the time we saw the Condors in order to get a size comparison; we were still awed by their great size. We were informed by two forest rangers in the area that the number of Condors is slowly increasing and the number is now approximately 70 birds; a fair increase over the 60 birds of many previous years.

After returning Dave to Crater Lake, Tony and I resumed our trip and headed for southern Arizona by way of San Diego where we saw many Elegant Terns exactly where Pettingill said they could be seen. His book, "Bird Finding West of the Mississippi" was an invaluable aid in our search for birds.

In southern Arizona we first visited the Santa Rita Mountains south of Tuscon. In these mountains we saw Sulphur-bellied Flycatchers, Painted Redstarts (the most beautiful warbler either of us had ever seen), a Coppery-tailed Trogon, Bridled Titmice, Arizona Jays, Mexican Juncos and several other more common species. Tony was fortunate in seeing five Coati Mundis on a trail near our camp early one morning.

The Graham Mountains north of Tuscon also proved profitable to visit. Besides many of the species we had seen in the Santa Ritas, we also saw the Red-faced and Grace's Warblers here. Pigmy Nuthatches were very common in these mountains. We were unsuccessful in finding the beautiful Olive Warbler, which breeds in these mountains.

Big Bend National Park in southern Texas was a "must stop" on our route because it contains the only known nesting grounds of the Colima Warbler in the U. S. A 5½ mile walk in near 100° temperatures to the small region in the Chisos Mountains where the birds are found was highlighted by seeing hundreds of White-throated Swifts flying past a huge cliff where they apparently nest. We were unsuccessful in finding the Colima Warbler but we did see several migrating Townsend's and Black-throated Gray Warblers in these mountains. A group of Varied Buntings along the Rio Grande were the best birds seen at Big Bend.

Santa Ana National Wildlife Refuge near Brownsville, left a great impression on me when I visited it last winter and I'm sure Tony had the same impression after our short visit to the "Jewell of the National Wildlife Refuges."

Since we reached the refuge after nightfall we camped at the entrance gate and eagerly awaited the dawn. The morning light revealed an armadillo scuffling past our tent, a groove-billed Ani and Green Jays in a nearby thicket and six Black-bellied Tree Ducks flying overhead. Inside the refuge we saw White-fronted Doves, Red-billed Pigeons, Kiskadee Flycatchers, Long-billed Thrashers and many of the other birds so characteristic of the lower Rio Grande Valley.

Santa Ana was our last major birding stop and after this sanctuary we saw very few new birds as we drove straight home. During the trip we traveled 11,000 miles in 32 days and saw 305 species of birds. The last bird on our list, appropriately enough, was St. Louis' own European Tree Sparrow, seen as I drove up to my house.

Editor's Note — Wally, as you know, was the young amateur ornithologist who discovered the Cattle Egrets on the Mississippi River levee which was written up in the Post-Dispatch on August 22.

AUDUBON CAMP DAYS

By SARAH OWEN

Oh! how great it was to attend the Audubon Camp of Wisconsin where treasures and pleasures awaited me.

The camp is located near Saronia in a wooded, lake area in northeast Wisconsin close to a variety of plant and animal habitats. These areas of swamps, bogs, forests, meadows, lakes and rivers were ours to explore during camp days.

A day at an Audubon Camp is a busy, fun packed one. Our activities centered around the great out-of-doors. In the morning on alternate days we had nature activities, and bird study. In the afternoon I had plant study. Hikes, bus, and boat trips led us to new experiences in all these fields of study. In the evening we enjoyed programs in the lodge.

Nature activities were many and varied; weather, astronomy, soil-water conservation, rocks-minerals, and nature crafts. Weather was discussed and experienced; warm, cool, sunny and rainy days. The clouds changed endlessly to give variety in the sky, and shadows and reflections below.

For bird study we went out in boats on Twin Lakes and Devils Lake, part of the Camp's property. We observed Green Heron, Osprey (three at a nest), Common Loons, Yellow-throated Warbler feeding a young Cowbird, Eastern Kingbird, Goldfinch, Cedar Waxwings, and numerous ducks.

While on a canoe trip on the beautiful Namekagon River we saw Belted Kingfishers, Green and Great Blue Herons, and Mallard ducks.

Hiking in the woods, along lake shores, and roads around camp we viewed the Broad-winged Hawk, Flicker, Phoebe, Bluebird, Yellow throated vireo, Red Eyed Vireo, Black-throat Blue Warbler, Brown Thrasher, Baltimore Oriole, Scarlet Tanager, Bobolink, Eastern Meadowlark, Redwing Blackbird, Grackle and others.

On the Spooner Fish Hatchery grounds we observed a family of Kildeer and on another occasion we saw Mourning Doves, Lesser and Greater Yellowlegs, Blue-winged Teal, Swallows, Crows and Bluejays.

Our initiation to plant study was via swamps, and bogs on spongy, soggy, wet hikes. Balsam Fir and Black Spruce were the dominant trees of these dark, cool, damp swamps.

The dominant trees in the bogs were the graceful Tamarack, and the spire like Black Spruce. Walking on the sphagnum moss of the bog was like walking on a thick, plush carpet, so springy, so floaty, so different. Pitcher plants were everywhere on the moss carpet, as was another fascinating insectivorous plant, the sundew.

Scores of interesting orchids, and gorgeous ferns were here, there and yonder. A tasty treat was to eat wild blueberries in the area. We saw wild cranberries growing and later visited a commercial cranberry bog.

Flowers grow at the edge of the lakes; Wild White Calla Lillies, Yellow and White Water Lilies, Pink Aquatic Smartweed, Pickerel Weed and Arrowhead to mention a few that gave color to the lakes waters.

Purples, yellows, and whites of the summer flowers colored the land areas and became our friends one by one.

On hikes we visited White Pine, Jack Pine, Maple-Basswood forests and learned of their interesting stories they had to reveal.

At the Crex Meadows Wildlife Area we saw Sandhill Cranes in flight, Sharp-tailed Grouse family on the road, Canada Geese, Common Loons, American Bittern and numerous ducks. Toward evening we saw deer feeding in the buckwheat.

The Red Pine on the campground was a symbol of the interwoven relationships of nature. A tree shelter for the birds as they came for food in the feeders. Then chipmunks scampered beneath its arms to find tasty morsels. The days gave varying hues to the trees bark, needles, and cones and to the feathered and furred friends that gathered there. The Hairy and Downy Woodpeckers, Black capped Chickadees, White Breasted Nuthatch, Purple Finch, Chipping and Song Sparrows, and Evening Grosbeaks were among the bird visitors.

Each evening at camp we had slides, prepared by the instructors, of their travels or studies, Audubon Camps, the new "Bald Eagle" color film by the National Audubon and various programs.

Books, records, charts, various resource materials were presented too.

The staff and their families were wonderful and offered such a wealth of knowledge and interests to all. Campers from various occupations, and localities were so interesting and nice to know. All the surprises were fun, food delicious, and the informality of the camp days provided a relaxed camp atmosphere.

I always look forward to fall and spring field trips of various Nature Groups, but to have planned nature activities and field trips daily while on a vacation was really a great thrill.

Surely my Audubon Camp Days will be a help to me personally and professionally as it introduced new interests, knowledge of nature, and professional techniques to share with students, friends, and family.

These weeks at the Audubon Camp of Wisconsin remain a pleasant memory of the endless variety of outdoor activities and my many new friends.

Editor's Note — The young lady attended this camp through the generosity of one of our Board Members, Mrs. Oscar Thalinger and this letter recites her experiences. Perhaps YOU would like to donate a scholarship.



There was no customary St. Louis Area off season summer birding lull in 1962, a season that features relaxed Nature trips, if any. In fact, the summer actually featured more feverish trips planned and executed than is usual for ANY reason.

It all began with the finding of a long expected Cattle Egret by Walter George, Jr. This adult bird turned up near Valley Park, Mo. on June 9th in the company of several saddle horses. Dick Anderson was the only other successful lister though Wally phoned the exciting news to several interested parties, many of whom made a hasty trip to the pasture that had enticed the bird turned "Horse Egret".

But that was only the beginning, folks, only the beginning. Wally was again the bearer of tidings of Cattle Egrets on June 22, this time with 5 on a Mississippi River Illinois Levee several miles below the St. Louis Jefferson Barracks Bridge. With this enticing news to spur us on, Bertha Massie, Kay Stewart, Earl Hath, Dave Jones and Earl Comfort persuaded—finagled is the word—Wally to play hookey from work and lead us to the exact spot the following day where we easily picked up the 5 white birds as soon as we located their almost inseparable pals, the herd of cattle that appears and disappears from view in a marshy pasture beside our levee as their wandering feeding takes them behind willow clumps or into open view. Later in the day Bertha, Kay and I became doubly excited when a rare Mississippi Kite soared into view at very close range near the egrets. If you think 5 Cattle Egrets make big news in our area you ain't heard nuthin' yet. The following Saturday (June 30th) 13 eager beaver birders again visited the cattle and their Egret buddies where we listed not 5, but 12 Cattles, all but one in adult breeding plumage. But still ain't heard nuthin' yet. Listen to this. Dorothea Vogel noticed one of the birds was gathering sticks. Naturally we watched the flight of the bird and easily traced the white bird with the trailing sticks protruding, obviously denoting nesting. We followed the nester by binoculars to a nearby island of the Miss. River. Later inspections denoted a mixed species herony on the island. Because it is the custom of the herons to mend their nests through incubation and rearing of young we assumed the initial nest building had taken place some time ago.

Because of the many Egrets in motion we estimated there were at least 20 Cattles though only 12 were actually in sight at one and the same time. On one occasion 6 of the egrets were flushed from the grassy levee side just ahead of our car where they were feeding on insects, the cattle assisting in the pasture by stirring up their favorite food. Occasionally an Egret hitch-hiked a bare back cattle ride as others walked alongside in comical sedate fashion as the hosts moved single file to a more remote feeding area. We found the rare Egret could be determined in flight by its more shallow and faster wing beat compared with other heron species. On this historic date we picked up 2 Miss. Kites. Since these birds remained close together we discussed the possibility of nesting kites as well as Cattle Egrets. On subsequent trips the Egrets and Kites were dependable listings.

When we added 7 Snowy Egrets and 6 Yellow-crowned Night Herons to the Kites and Cattles as well as numerous adult Little Blue Herons we almost wondered if we were really in the St. Louis area or in the Southland. What a difference a suitable habitat makes. We are deeply in debt to Wally for discovering this bit of Bird Disneyland.

Because Walter Liddell and Earl Hath took pictures of the popular Egrets we fortunately have ample proof of the rare visitation.

There was a good Spring warbler migration, resulting in the listing of 35 species. Best recordings were Pine, Cape May, Hooded, Connecticut and Yellow-throated.

We also enjoyed a better than fair shorebird migration in the Spring with such good species as Willet, Black-bellied Plover, Wilson's Phalarope and Baird's, Whiterumped and Western Sandpipers making the local list.

We had our usual 22 species of ducks with an unusual checking of 2 broods of Blue-winged Teal to add to the interest of the marsh wading. Oldsquaw, White-winged Scoter and Greater Scaup were the most exciting finds. Wood Ducks were better represented than usual with apparent excellent nesting success.

Teenager Kay Stewart listed her 200th bird species as early as May 19th, a remarkable feat since she is only in her second birding year.

Dick Anderson is shooting for a lunch hour total of 200 species. Last reports indicate he will reach his goal with species to spare.

The story of the Cattle Egrets and Miss. Kites is still being written on our local levee as subsequent checking proved on July 28th when Dick Anderson and Kathryn Arhos, Mary Frances Goodloe and Kay Stewart counted 16 of the Egrets, four of them, mind you, young of the year, no doubt from the nearby herony. But that wasn't all. No siree. An immature kite detected by Mike Flieg graced the region, undoubtedly having been reared in the vicinity. But there is more. To add to the decided Southern setting Dick noticed a Black Vulture among the many Turkey species sunning themselves along the road atop the levee. This species very rarely pays us a social visit. What will be next before the finis?

Later dike checking gave us 2 Miss. Kites reared near the levee and a rare Buff-breasted Sandpiper. The Cattle Egret count was 28 on Aug. 18th.

Non Levee news shows Jim Comfort listing a real rare Western Kingbird at the August A. Busch Wildlife Area on Aug. 4th.

The excellent Nature Study-Conservation work annually co-sponsored by the Garden and our society saw local members Lennie Criger, Eva Kirkpatrick and Kay Stewart acting as teacher leaders of the summer youth groups that are so eager to learn about Nature first hand.

Dick Anderson and Kay Stewart gave us our best bird of the year and one of our all time best species at the Marais Temp Clair Marshes in St. Charles Co. on Aug. 26th when they came up with an accidental White Ibis. It was our very first record. It was still there when Dave Jones and Jim Comfort hastily visited the area that afternoon, but other seekers failed to locate it.

A Peregrine Falcon was seen at Grand Marais on Aug. 31st and on the levee Sept. 1st. Chalk up another rarity for the levees.

On Sept. 6th Dick Anderson gave us another area "first" when he spied a Black-headed Grosbeak which he shared with Kathryn Arhos. Dick also found a rare Nelson's Sharp-tailed Sparrow on this trip, a species that failed to make the grade on our last year's area total list.

Earl and Connie Hath's Cattle Egret on the Mississippi River near Pevely, Mo. was another exciting listing of the species before it became a matter-of-fact bird on the levee. The Cattle Egrets and Kites left us the last week in August.

The levee was still producing rare birds in a big way when Mike Flieg found a Fish Crow among other crows on Sept. 12th. It was another Area first.

On the 15th Kathryn Arhos, Earl Hath and Earl Comfort had a rare Piping Plover at a levee mud flat. The next day Dick and Mitzi Anderson found another Piping Plover at the Alton Dam. Their 14 Caspian Terns there were the subject of envy.

The levee was still giving out with rarities on the 22nd when our group listed a Sanderling. Little did Wally George know what a birding gold mine he had found on that early summer day when he detected Cattle Egrets on the popular levee. Probably no other local area has been visited as often by birders, past or present, as these levees.

On Oct. 7th the Busch Wildlife Area stole the show from our pampered levee by producing 2 ruffs identified by Arthur Boroughf, Dr. Thos. Thale and Dr. Ralph W. Laffey. On the 9th Dick Anderson verified the extraordinary listing with Kathryn Arhos, Mr. and Mrs. Jim Comfort and Bertha Massie putting the accidental species to the identification test through a 40 power scope at very close range, all concurring. But 1 Ruff was seen after Dick's trip to Busch. It is an original area listing.

PERSONALS

Our thanks to Lanier Criger, Kay Stewart, and Eva Kirkpatrick on their splendid work this past summer in presenting the ornithology end of the nature program to the young people at Shaw's Garden, under the auspices of the Missouri Botanical Garden and the St. Louis Audubon Society and sponsored by the Pitzman Foundation.

Richard P. Grossenheider was elected President of the Missouri Audubon Society at their annual meeting Sunday, October 14, at Lake of the Ozarks State Park.

Missouri Botanical Garden and St. Louis Orchid Society were hosts for the International Orchid Show last week. A scientific talk entitled "Recent Developments in Control of Orchid Pests and Diseases" was given by Marshall Magner to the delegates.

FIELD TRIPS

Do not overlook the third Saturday and last Sunday of each month to attend the field trips held at the Arboretum at Gray's Summit, starting from the St. Louis Audubon Society Nature Center at 8 a. m.

We wish to thank the following for their efforts in keeping the Center open on these days:

Mrs. Maud Hoag
Mrs. Dorothy Gettler
Mrs. Lanier Criger

MOVIES

On November 29, Bertha and Joel Massie will show slides of their trip "One Way to Rainbow" at the Natural Bridge Library at 8 p. m.

November 30 the St. Louis Audubon Society and the Webster Groves Nature Study Society are sponsoring a movie at the St. Louis County Library at 8 p. m. entitled "Wilderness Alps of Stehekin".

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